



the gull

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October Meeting: Robert Bateman

Canada's premier wildlife artist, Robert Bateman, will be the speaker at the October meeting. This is a special opportunity to hear Bateman speak about his travels and his paintings which have made him a legend in his own lifetime.

A painter in the "super-realist" tradition, Bateman's work is eagerly sought by collectors the world over. GGAS is indeed honored to have him as our guest. If you have an interest in wildlife art this is *the* meeting you won't want to miss.

For this meeting the day and time have been changed to accommodate this special program. It will be held at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley, on **Tuesday, October 11, at 6:30 p.m.**

A wine and cheese reception will follow at 7:30 p.m. at the Nature Company Store, 1991 El Dorado, Berkeley (just through the Solano Ave. Tunnel from the church). Bateman will be available to sign prints and his book at the reception.

November Meeting

The November meeting will feature George Peyton, National Audubon Society board member. The meeting will again be held at the Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley and, to compensate, the first two meetings of 1984 will be held in San Francisco. The December event is the Christmas Bird Count meeting.

—PROGRAM COMMITTEE

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Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, October 1—Alameda South Shore. (See Sept. *Gull*)

Sunday, October 2—Point Reyes. (See Sept. *Gull*)

Sunday, October 9—Sunol Regional Park. (See Sept. *Gull*)

Wednesday, October 12—Mini trip to Aquatic Park, Berkeley, and other nearby shoreline areas. Meet at **9:30 a.m.** in the northwest corner of Spenger's parking lot to carpool. We should see returning shorebirds and migratory ducks. Lunch optional; rain cancels trip. Leaders: Delpha deTimofeev and Ruth Voss (525-8032).

Saturday, October 15—San Francisco Bird Blitz—A Benefit for Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes near 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park. We will caravan to other sites in San Francisco including Lake Merced, Fort Funston and Candlestick Point. This will be an all-day trip so bring lunch. We hope to see about 100 species. The purpose of this trip is to raise money for PRBO so you will be expected to pledge at least five cents for every species seen. Get additional pledges from friends and neighbors for this worthwhile organization. Bring your checkbook! We will finish the day with dinner at Celia's Mexican Restaurant. Please contact Dan if you plan to join the group for dinner. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074).

Saturday, October 23—San Mateo Coast. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the Pescadero Beach parking lot at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and Pescadero Rd. Please carpool to this point if possible because parking is limited and carpooling will be necessary. We will bird at Pescadero, then along the coast to Ano Nuevo (\$). Bring lunch and a jacket; the weather can be cold along the coast. We will be looking for shorebirds. Leader: Alan Hopkins (585-5669).

Saturday, October 29—Mt. Diablo State Park. Meet at **9:30 a.m.** at the Rock City parking lot. From Oakland go east on I-580, then north on I-680 to Danville and follow the signs east on Diablo Rd. to the park (\$). We will be in oak woodland, meadows and inland chaparral plant communities. The major attraction on this trip is the tarantula migration. We will also visit the UC Berkeley study area to see the effect of fire on chaparral communities. At the end of the trip we will caravan to the top of the mountain to see all of northern California. This trip will be led by two well-known Bay Area ecologists. Leader: Ed Bedecarrax (254-1795).
(✓)

Sunday, October 30—Fall Bird Sounds at Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland. Meet at 8 a.m. at Joaquin Miller ranger station. From the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13 between Berkeley and Oakland) take Joaquin Miller Rd. off ramp. At the stop signs turn east (towards hill) and follow Joaquin Miller Rd. .8 miles uphill. Turn left onto Sanborn Dr. The entrance to the parking area is .1 mile on the left. We will walk three to four miles through a variety of habitats that provide a good opportunity to see Winter Wren, Hutton's Vireo, California Thrasher and other species. After a leisurely lunch, we will explore Bay Marina for water and shorebirds. Leader: Marie Mans (284-7681). (✓)

Sunday, November 6—Tennessee Valley. Meet at 9 a.m. and bring lunch. Going north across the Golden Gate Bridge, take the Mill Valley exit under the Richardson Bay Bridge and in one-half mile turn left at the Tennessee Valley sign. Drive to the end of the road. We will walk on the flat trail looking for land and sea birds. Rain cancels trip. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020) during work hours). (✓)

Saturday, November 12—Coyote Hills Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot by the visitors' center. From Hwy. 17 take the Jarvis Ave. exit in Newark and continue to Newark Blvd. and turn north. Follow the signs from there to the park. We should see common waterfowl, shorebirds and landbirds. Leader: David Rice (527-6696). (✓)

Note from the Field Trips Committee—Beginners are always welcome on GGAS field trips. Leaders and participants are eager to introduce people to this activity which we all enjoy. From time to time the committee will plan trips especially for beginners. These trips will generally go to nearby areas to see resident species.

Sunday, November 5—Beginners' Field Trip to Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes near 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way. We will identify the common water and landbirds of this area. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. The trip will end before lunch. Leader: Woody Kuehn (239-7914).

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-9053 and leave a message. She will contact you.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Shirley Kelly (387-8290) or the GGAS office (845-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

August Observations — through August 24

August is always a lull in Bay Area rare birds. The fall passage of scarce shorebirds dominates the sightings. A scattering of other waterbirds adds only limited diversity and there are very few notable landbirds. In these respects this August fit the pattern even more than most.

SHOREBIRDS

The early flight of Lesser Golden Plovers continued, with three still at Cader Lane, Petaluma, through Aug. 4 (GFi) and two Aug. 13. Another in breeding plumage was at Pescadero July 30-Aug. 3 (MS, et al., AG, WG). Four of the early Pectoral Sandpipers at Cader Lane remained to July 27 and a single through Aug. 4 (GF, GFi). Juvenal-plumaged Semipalmated Sandpipers are even more recognized here and oral documentation is improving. In addition to several "probables," Semis were found as follows: two at Pescadero July 29-Aug. 3 (BS, MF, AG, WG) with one apparently there Aug. 4 (ED) and singles at Lodi Sewage Ponds July 31 (KH), Lawson's Landing Aug. 1 (JE), Cader Lane Aug. 13 (KC) and Doran Pond at Bodega Bay Aug. 14 (KC).

A **Temminck's Stint** adult in fresh winter plumage was identified Aug. 6 at the large pond south of the Salinas River Mouth (DR, et al.). If the report is accepted by the California Bird Records Committee it will be the first for California. A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was reported Aug. 22 from Cader Lane (RT) where the species has occurred before. Ponds by the intersection of Thornton and Jarvis in Fremont were found to have a male (?) **Ruff** Aug. 19-23 (EM, KE, YE, AM, et al.).

PELAGICS

A report of two Ashy Storm-Petrels **beside the Berkeley Pier** Aug. 22 and a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel there Aug. 23 (both JWe) seemed incredible in the absence of any storm to have blown them into the Bay! However, on Aug. 24 a boat from Monterey encountered 20 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels inside the harbor and 30 more off Cannery Row (SFB, DR, et al.)! Other sightings from San Francisco continued this story after my August 24 cutoff date and will be compiled in my September column. Significantly, all of these shoreward storm-petrels were actively feeding, offering rare opportunities to observe foraging behavior. It is clear to me that these birds were *attracted* to shore by a very unusual food distribution, rather than *blown in* by (nonexistent) gales as is usual when petrels are found in harbors.

The Aug. 24 boat found four species of storm-petrels scattered west of the Monterey Peninsula (but only one Fork-tailed offshore!), including ten **Least Storm-Petrels** (DR, SFB, et al.). This is probably the earliest

sighting for Northern California, although it fits their occurrence to the south. There were also 15 very early Black-vented Shearwaters and about 46 Xantus' Murrelets (*scripsi*) plus one of the **southern race** (*hypoleuca*) (SFB, DR, et al.). On Aug. 13 another boat found two **Craveri's Murrelets** off Santa Cruz County (DLS, et al.). This predominance of southern pelagics surely relates to the unusually warm ocean waters off California.

OTHER WATERBIRDS

Red-necked Grebes regularly return to Drakes Bay in August, but 15 between Drakes Beach and Fish Docks Aug. 14 (DT) was a startling number. Two immature **Magnificent Frigatebirds** were spotted, one at Palomarin Aug. 1 (fide JE) and other at Montara Aug. 4 (BS). An adult Little Blue Heron was at Charleston Slough, Palo Alto, July 18 (fide BB). Pescadero Lagoon on Aug. 4 represented a strange place and time for a Wood Duck (ED).

Over 500 Elegant Terns at Abbotts Lagoon Aug. 1 (EG) were a very high count for north of Bolinas, but reflected the species' recent spread northward. A **Black Skimmer** was at Pajaro River Mouth July 16 (JW, RW, fide DR). Stranger was an apparent **Black Skimmer** skimming the quarry pond at Rockridge, Oakland, July 9 and Aug. 20 (DBW), the observer's only visits to the site all summer!

THE LANDBIRD

The *only* landbird of real note was an apparently-immature **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** at Road Forks Pool, Point Reyes, Aug. 6 (SC, BW).

Erratum: Obviously the observations in the July-August issue should be titled "May" Observations, not "April."

Observers: Stephen F. Bailey, Bill Bousman, Kurt Campbell, Graham Chisholm, Tom Condit, Susan Crutchfield, Jim Danzenbaker, Edwin Ducrr, Koichi Endo, Yasuko Endo, Jules Evens, Gary Fellers (GF), Mark Fenner, George Finger (GF_i), Albert Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Ed Graves, Kem Hainebach, Nancy Hillyard, Carol Kaiser, Akiko Makishima, Eugene Makishima, Lina Prairie, Don Roberson, Barry Sauppe, Debra Shearwater, Maury Stern, Ron Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, David B. Wake, Bruce Walker, John Warriner (JW), Ricky Warriner, John Westlake (JW_c), Jack Whetstone.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology,

University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720

(phone 548-9507 or Joseph Morlan at 524-7421)

Wildlife Art Benefit Drawing

Here is your chance to support GGAS and its varied programs. Stop by the office or write for drawing tickets. Perhaps you will win a holiday gift of lasting beauty and value. It may be that the call of the Dipper (by Robert Bateman) will echo in your living room or the Summer Tanager (by Roger Tory Peterson) will light your den or, if you are really lucky, perhaps the beautiful Snow Goose will fly in your office. (The "Snow Goose" is sold retail for \$200 and John Ruthven's early edition prints have all sold out.)

GGAS has received warm support from both local businesses and artists to help make this drawing a success. You can assure its success by selling tickets and of course buying them for yourself. Remember, GGAS supports not only field trips, programs, an office, habitat enhancement projects and ongoing biological research, it also speaks with a respected voice for wildlife and your environment both in Sacramento and Washington.

SELL THE MOST TICKETS AND WIN A PRIZE

The top five ticket sellers will be awarded wildlife art of fine art quality: prints and posters. Stop in at the office to see the prizes. They are gorgeous. Then sign up to sell tickets and win one through ambitious sales. Prize prints depict Snowy Owls, Puffins, Pandas and more; each has a retail value in the \$25 range.

You can request tickets by sending the form on page 151 and a SASE. If you wish a supply to sell you need not send money, just request the number you need. All money must be turned in to the GGAS office by December 1. The drawing will be held on Thursday, December 8.

GGAS California Condor Statement

(adopted by the GGAS board at its June 1983 meeting and modified 8/29/83)

1. The Golden Gate Audubon Society supports National Audubon Society's objective of saving the California Condor.
2. In order to maintain the integrity of the wild population, the Golden Gate Audubon Society urges restraint in the handling and taking of eggs, nestlings and free-flying birds for the Captive Breeding Program.

3. The Golden Gate Audubon Society supports the radiotelemetry and sex determination provisions of the Condor Recovery Plan.
4. We urge that primary consideration be given to increased and expanded habitat protection. The Recovery Program should continue to assess the historical and present habitat needs of the California Condor, identifying public and private holdings appropriate to those needs (e.g., Hudson Ranch) and assure the preservation of such habitat by any means necessary, including land purchase and protective zoning.
5. The consideration of any California Fish and Game permits to capture wild condors should be preceded by a ninety (90) day public review and comment period. All data and information should be made public. Under no circumstances should "open-ended" permits be issued. Each aspect of the plan should be reconsidered separately and be contingent upon the results of the preceding phases of the Recovery Program.
6. The Golden Gate Audubon Society endorses a program of increased research into the effects of chemicals on the California Condor. A major focus of this research should involve an investigation of the effects of Compound 1080 and DDT on the condor as well as other species which feed on poisoned ground squirrels. Within the range of the condor, the use of all herbicides and pesticides should be stringently controlled by both Federal and State agencies.
7. The Golden Gate Audubon Society endorses a policy of limited use of firearms in areas frequented by condors. We support the imposition of a reasonable shell limit on hunters. An increased number of wardens should be assigned to patrol known condor roosting, nesting and watering areas. Hunting should not be banned unless research proves that it is detrimental to the condor. There should be a complete ban on target shooting and random shooting of any kind, including signaling distant hunters by firing weapons.
8. The Golden Gate Audubon Society endorses a program of intensified and expanded research into the ecology of the California Condor, prior to any further disruption of the condor's biology and ecology.
9. The Golden Gate Audubon Society endorses a program of increased public education regarding the California Condor. Educational material should be readily available in all public places (e.g., campgrounds, schools, stores and public buildings). We urge National Audubon Society to develop and implement publicity and educational programs for conservation of the California Condor.

Least Tern News

The last Least Tern (LT) nesting attempt around the Bay was finished on August 22. Naval Air Station, Alameda, hosted only three pairs this year while the majority of East Bay nesting pairs (56-65) nested at the Oakland Airport (OA). Twenty-two pairs nested at Bair Island and at least five to six pairs nested at Port Chicago. One chick fledged successfully at NAS. It appears only six to nine fledged at OA indicating that reproductive success at the colony was extremely poor; this was due to predation. Fledglings were not seen at Bair Island. At least one chick fledged at Port Chicago. One person reported seeing about 12 fledglings at a pre-migratory staging area, south of OA, near the San Mateo Bridge, on August 27, suggesting that additional young may have fledged at a couple of the colonies.

At least three Least Terns, banded as chicks at (NAS) in 1981, were seen at OA this year. They were in breeding plumage and two of them nested as a pair. This pair fledged two young but only one may have survived to leave the colony. More of the 1981 NAS chicks are expected to be breeding next year and we eagerly await their arrival. We hope next year to see 100+ chicks fledge from NAS alone, as we did in 1981.

—LAURA COLLINS

Bouverie Audubon Preserve

The Bouverie Audubon Preserve is the newest portion of Audubon Canyon Ranch. It is located in the Valley of the Moon, near the City of Sonoma. Stuart Creek runs through the canyon and many habitats layer the hills. There are meadows and oaks, redwood and chaparral. Local Native Americans consider this site to be sacred; it is to be approached with respect and reverence. All who visit it agree that it is a special place. The Preserve is surrounded by private property, mainly cattle ranches; in fact, one must cross the Bouverie ranch to reach the Preserve. All access to the Preserve is by appointment and visits are led by Bouverie Audubon Preserve docents. The main gate remains closed and locked at all times except when a group is coming or going.

The Madrone Audubon Society has arranged three outings at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve for members of the Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon societies. These trips will be led by BAP docents. Because this Preserve has limited and controlled access, please call 707-996-0601 for reservations. Directions, instructions and a map will be mailed with reservations.

The Preserve visit dates for GGAS and the other two groups are October 29, January 28 and April 28, all on Saturday.

The Back Yard Birder

Perched on the nearby rowboat was a sleek Barn Swallow. He gave the impression of being dressed in formal attire; the rusty tones of his chest contrasted with his black iridescent back complete with forked tail. Clutched tightly in his beak was a fluffy white feather, no doubt once attached to one of the gulls soaring over Lake Tahoe. Excitedly, I told my friend that I had read that swallows had been observed "playing" with feathers. No sooner said than done! Upon spotting another swallow, off he flew, feather still held in his beak. When he came near the second bird he dropped the feather and #2 bird swooped down and caught it in midair. Then it was *his* turn to perform a few aerobatic maneuvers before dropping the feather for #1 to capture. This game continued for some minutes, amusing us as well as the birds. I never cease to be thrilled at being a witness to some form of bird behavior about which I've heard or read.

Do birds and animals really play or is this simply instinctive behavior? No doubt this type of play is important to young birds in improving their flying skills. There have been enough documented examples to believe that true play is widespread among birds as well as animals (otters and dolphins come to mind). In *Learning and Instinct in Animals*, W. H. Thorpe describes numerous acts of play. One observer noted that when European kestrels became satiated with hunting they returned to their summer breeding grounds where they played with pine cones, grasses and roots until the time came for them to start hunting again. Many people have noted the playfulness of crows, ravens and magpies. Some birds of prey, notably the Marsh Hawk, play cat and mouse with their prey.

Other observations include house sparrows which were seen dropping pebbles on glass and metal, seemingly for the sounds made; Eider ducks in Iceland were seen riding down a series of rapids, then climbing the banks to again launch themselves on the stream. Like all animals in the wild, play is vital to the young in developing skills necessary for hunting and defending themselves. Play is also important in the maintenance and perfection of muscular coordination. Mere existence depends upon being in peak condition. But who can deny that the Barn Swallows playing "drop the feather" were not having a good time as well?

—MEG PAULETICH

Special Thanks

To Nancy Conzett for substituting as editor for the September *GULL*. To Helen Green for typing the *Observations* many, many times. To Fanya Carter for proofreading many, many *GULLs*.

News from the Ranch

Stan Picher, coming from a world of poetry at Harvard University and a bookstore in Chicago, was a man of books. As the co-founder of Audubon Canyon Ranch, his earliest plans included books for the Ranch. The bookstore in Picher Canyon was established early on and continues today in its new quarters very successfully. It is one of the most active environmental bookstores in Northern California.

Stan also established a library. Today a fine working and reference library, maintained through donations, is headquartered in Volunteer Canyon. Its collection is wide-ranging, with books on birds, mammals, flowers, geography, geology, etc. Recently, two dedicated and hard-working ACR docents, Vivian Smith and Dorothy Mendelson, have devoted many hours to organizing the collection.

—CLIFFORD CONLY, JR.

Conservation Committee Meeting Change

To accomodate the change in the October membership meeting the Conservation Committee will meet **Thursday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m.** in the GGAS office. All interested are welcome.

—ART FEINSTEIN

Regrets

The delayed delivery of the September *GULL*, for reasons as yet unknown, is regretted.

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

Gift of

In Memory of

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. to Minnie Groshong, Corresponding Secretary, Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705-1179. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Corresponding Secretary.



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THE GULL

3

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) 843-2211

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**